

WANDERERS HANG ON AT SUTTON

By "CHILTERN"

Sutton United 1, Wycombe Wanderers 1.

WYCOMBE WANDERERS can count themselves extremely lucky to come away from Gander Green-lane with a point on Saturday. They can call it a Christmas bonus from the league leaders who were unable to press home their territorial dominance.

In fact for the first 20 minutes of the second-half it was only a brilliant display of inspired goalkeeping by John Maskell that kept the points-hungry Sutton attack at bay.

What a battering the Wycombe goal had taken. Sutton hit a post and the crossbar and on several occasions the ball seemed certain to find the net when Maskell appeared from somewhere to tip it round or over, or to punch it clear.

On paper a point at Sutton was a credit to Wycombe. In reality they were more than fortunate.

The leaders, who had won at Enfield during the week, were on top form. They played a fluid brand of football and must be a good bet for the title.

But every credit must go to the Wycombe defence who fought to the last ditch. It was always a hard game, and quite a lot of "needle" crept in—as was rather expected in the situation.

After several near misses Sutton took a deserved lead in the 30th minute when international left-half Ted Powell received a return pass from centre-forward Hutchins and powered it past Maskell from close in.

Their lead was shortlived however, and five minutes later Charlie Gale put Les Merrick away on the left. The winger shrugged off a sturdy tackle from Dario Gradi and pin-pointed a left-footed centre to Paul Bates who picked his spot while under pressure.

The whole Wycombe defence played well. John Beck failed to reappear after the interval after receiving a first-half kick in the kidneys, and his place was taken by substitute Vic Sherbourne who performed admirably. It was not a pleasant situation to find oneself in.

With time running out Wycombe began to use the touchline—to the annoyance of the Sutton crowd. But in the last minute of injury time Tony Horseman jinked his way through and beat four men before being foiled by a fifth in front of goal. Had he scored it would have been a gross injustice to Sutton who deserved both points rather than none at all.

Wycombe—J. Maskell; J. Beck, P. Royston; B. Baker, I. Rundle, C. Gale; L. Worley. K. Samuels, P. Bates, T. Horseman, L. Merrick.